

SPORTS

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SUNDAY, MAY 25, 1997

FARMINGTON — FARMINGTON HILLS SPORTS SCENE

Junior golf tournament

The Farmington Optimist Club and Metrobank will sponsor a junior golf tournament Thursday, June 12, at Glen Oaks Golf Course. Boys and girls will compete separately in three age divisions: 12-13, 14-15, 16-18. This is part of a qualifying tournament in which the winners advance to a state tournament and possibly a national tournament.

The entrance fee is \$17 for 18 holes of golf, including a light meal and an awards ceremony at approximately 5:30 p.m. Tee times are between 11:30 a.m. and 1 p.m.

For more information call Laurie Kupferer at (810) 477-1844 or Ruth Platt at (810) 478-3027.

Entry forms may be obtained by calling one of the above numbers, or you may pick one up at the Farmington Hills Recreation Office at Eleven Mile and Orchard Lake roads.

Glen Oaks is located at 30500 Thirteen Mile Road in Farmington Hills.

Players join parade group

South Farmington baseball and softball players have been invited to march in the Memorial Day Parade in Farmington on Monday.

All players and coaches should meet at Frank's Nursery dressed in their uniforms at 9:10 a.m. Monday.

Lee earns bronze medal

Daren Lee of Farmington earned a bronze medal in the Tae-Kwon-Do national competition May 7-10 in Oakland, Calif.

The 17-year-old, who is finishing his junior year at Farmington High School, is skilled enough in the martial art to qualify to compete in the adult division.

Lee's third-place finish qualified him for the United States team trials June 13-14 in Phoenix, Ariz.

He is one of six who will compete in a round-robin format, with the winner earning the featherweight (132-140) position on the national team.

Lee also is entered in the Junior Nationals set for June 30-July 5 in Louisville, Ky. The United States Tae-Kwon-Do Union sponsors the events.

MU adds another sport

A seventh collegiate sport will be added to Madonna University's docket, starting with the 1998-99 school year: women's soccer.

Madonna currently offers men's soccer, men's and women's basketball, women's volleyball, baseball and softball.

Starting this fall, Madonna will compete in the Wolverine-Hoosier Athletic Conference. The other six members of the WHAC have women's soccer teams.

Madonna has begun its search for a coach. Interested parties may send their resumes to: Soccer Search Committee, Madonna University, 36600 Schoolcraft, Livonia, MI 48150.

New teams need players

Players interested in competing for either an under-17 or an open division premier girls soccer team are needed.

The teams will be coached by Mike Esparza, a professional team trainer from England with 20 years of playing and coaching experience, including the professional level.

Players for the open division team should be born after July 31, 1978, and before Aug. 1, 1982; under-17 players should have birth dates after July 31, 1980, and before Aug. 1, 1982.

Call (313) 464-9114 for further details and try-out information.

Summer baseball camps

The Sports Academy will hold two sessions of summer baseball days camps, instructed by University of Detroit-Mercy assistant Lee Bjerke and former UDM pitcher Steve Ross, for boys and girls ages 8-14.

Session I is from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Monday through Thursday, June 16-19; and Session II is Monday through Thursday, July 28-31.

The \$100 cost includes group instruction, fundamentals, drills, contests, games at Novi's Powers Park, T-shirt for each camper, lunch (pizza or subs including drink), award certificates and 10 percent off at the pro shop.

For more information, call the Sports Academy at (248) 380-0860.

Brown commits to OLSM

West Bloomfield swingman Pierre Brown has made a verbal commitment to play basketball at Orchard Lake St. Mary's College.

"I'm truly excited to have him come into our program," said St. Mary's coach Chris Dalek. "I think he is someone who can help us right away. He's not the type of person who is going to sit on the bench his whole first year."

Brown, an All-Eclectic third-team selection, averaged 16 points per game for the Lakers and wrapped up his high school career with a 36-point effort in West Bloomfield's 69-64 loss to Birmingham Seaholm in a regional game.

Dalek thinks Brown is an outstanding jumper and will bring good quickness to the program. St. Mary's also signed Hazel Park guard Al Rogers.

Initial golf season has plus side

Farmington's girls golf team didn't bowl over the competition in its first season but fared better than anyone might have expected of a new team.



BY DAN O'MEARA
AND BRAD EMONS
STAFF WRITERS

Usually, a sixth-place finish isn't something about which a team can boast, but 1997 wasn't just another year for the Farmington girls golf team.

In its first season of competition, the all-school Farmington team was better than three others with established programs in the nine-member Western Lakes Activities Association tournament Thursday.

That's far better than most expansion teams normally do.

These girls, without any experience in competitive golf, have really matured in competition," Farmington coach Ann Marie Sopha said. "They became so tough in a short season. They had been peaking and I think they were ready."

Livonia Stevenson capped an undefeated dual-meet season by winning the WLAA tournament at Hudson Mills Metropark in Dexter.

The Spartans, 10-0 overall and 8-0 in the WLAA, edged Plymouth Salem by six strokes for the coveted title, 387-393.

Walled Lake Central and Walled Lake Western were a close third and fourth with 394 and 396, respectively.

Livonia Churchill was fifth (409) followed by Farmington (417), Northville (428), Plymouth Canton (438) and Livonia Franklin (521).

Farmington senior Kelly Wachsburg, who missed most of the season because of injury, shot 92 to finish fourth individually and earn one of five all-conference positions.

Wachsburg suffered a knee injury playing indoor soccer last winter and missed much of the season.

Then, while practicing for the regional, she was hit in the ankle by a golf ball, and was forced to sit out that event, too.

"I'm just really pleased for Kelley; it was nice she got the opportunity," Sopha said. "She was never on a golf team before, and she missed her



String up the next shot: Senior Kelly Wachsburg prepares to make a putt during the Western Lakes tournament Thursday. Wachsburg put aside some earlier disappointments this season to earn all-conference recognition and lead Farmington to a sixth-place team finish.

chance to qualify for state.

"This was her big shot at it, and I was really pleased to see her play so well today."

Teammate Laura Cunniffe was 15th overall and earned all-division honors. Carrie May, Stephanie Unger, Katie Perry and Emily Sikora also competed Thursday for Farmington, which had a 3-5 in league duals and 4-7 overall.

"Laura has been a solid player in

her first year of competition, so I was happy she was able to squeak in there for a medal," Sopha said.

"We're so delighted because every match was away, at a new course the girls weren't familiar with, so I was real pleased at how they did."

Salem had the top two individual golfers, led by medalist Katie Murina, who shot an 85. Teammate Katie Collins was second with an 87.

Stevenson was led by third-place

finisher Kelly Kristy, who had a 90, and fifth-place finisher Mara Mazoni, who carded a 93.

"Salem has two wonderful golfers in Murina and Collins who played very, very well," Stevenson coach John Wagner said. "The tourney went pretty much true to form. We knew Salem was the team to beat."

In a regular season dual meet,

Please see GIRLS GOLF, D3

Driving for distance is all that counts



Rob Peters: He's a five-time national finalist in the long-drive hitting contest.

BY DAN O'MEARA
STAFF WRITER

As far as Rob Peters is concerned, a tee shot that isn't long is wrong.

That's because Peters, a five-time national finalist in the long-drive contest, has the sole aim of driving a golf ball the greatest possible distance.

For long drivers like the 32-year-old Westland resident, a good drive is like the thrill that comes with hitting a home run.

"If you've ever hit a baseball just the right way, kicked a football or shot a hockey puck, you know when you really got it," he said.

Peters played golf in high school and junior college but wasn't good enough, by his own assessment, to take his game to the next level.

However, he could hit a golf ball far, and he found his sporting niche in the long-drive contest.

"Trying to be competitive in all facets of the game — chipping,

GOLF

putting — got old quick," he said. "Doing long-drive events, I can still be competitive in a form of golf."

Peters, whose best drive was 388 yards, got the idea to enter a long-drive competition while visiting an uncle in Florida 10 years ago.

"My uncle's friend said 'You know, son, my son-in-law does long drive, and I think you ought to try it. You hit the ball as far as him, maybe even better.'"

Peters headed off to a course in Ohio that was having a local qualifying contest and began a passionate interest in his new-found sport.

"I took a regular driver I had no idea what I was doing," Peters said. "All I knew is that it was a long-drive contest and I hit the ball a long way."

The second-to-last-guy bumped me out, but I was hooked. I had to do this more; I knew I had better

shots in me. I've been going great guns every since."

In his five trips to the national finals in Las Vegas, Peters has finished as high as 13th in a field of nearly 40 entries and was 20th last year.

Contestants must first qualify at the local level in sectional events and next the district phase to earn a berth in the national tournament.

The number of district qualifiers is determined by the number of entries. Anybody can enter but must declare amateur or professional status because of prize money offered at the national level.

A novice long driver might enter one local event and leave it at that, but the more serious pros like Peters go to as many qualifying events as possible to increase their chances.

"One guy had the idea to go to a lot of districts," Peters said. "Needless to say, a lot of us have taken the ball and run with it."

Please see LONG DRIVE, D3

Lesson learned

Rocks apply coach's strategy in WLAA victory

BY DAN O'MEARA
STAFF WRITER

Mark Gregor learned a valuable lesson about coaching strategy eight years ago, and his Plymouth Salem girls track team applied it successfully Wednesday.

Despite winning just one of 16 events, the Rocks had more than enough overall ability to win their third Western Lakes Activities Association championship in six years.

Salem ended third-place Plymouth Canton's three-year reign, edging Livonia Stevenson in the annual conference meet at Farmington High, 138-119.

The Rocks were runners-up in 1989, even though they won eight events. Gregor learned

GIRLS TRACK

winning half the battles doesn't guarantee winning the war.

"When that happens, it kinda sticks in your memory," Gregor said. "We went through the results of that meet a hundred times in the off season."

"We know why and how it happened; we just didn't have enough depth. We changed our strategy after that and made it a necessity to develop several athletes in each event."

Salem had all the depth it needed Wednesday with a well-balanced lineup. Jessica Ash gave the Rocks their only victory in the shot put, but

Salem scored in every event.

Lisa Maul, Angie Sillmon and Katie Bonner earned points in four events each to lead the Rocks.

Sillmon scored in the long jump and high jump; Maul in both hurdle events; Bonner in the 200-meter dash and the 400.

Maul and Sillmon helped Salem finish third in the 400 relay, Sillmon and Bonner second in the 800, Maul and Bonner second in the 1,600.

"I really believe our league meet is one of the most competitive in the state," Gregor said. "It was a matter of trying to come up with the best lineup to take advantage of the talent of our athletes."

Please see GIRLS TRACK, D1